

School Committee Meeting Minutes
Shirley Middle School
October 13, 2004

Present: Gary Bourassa, Chairperson
Hugh Muffoletto, Vice Chairperson
Paul Wilson
Bob Prescott
Don Parker

Also Present: Dr. Thomas Scott, Superintendent
Patricia Stern, Business Manager
Joe DeGuglielmo, DEAC representative
Cheryl Hayden, FinCom
Kyle Keady, Town Administrator
Jane Cook
Robin Hacking-Davis
Darlene Richardson

The meeting began at 7:02 p.m.

Public Participation:

Darlene Richardson, Shirley resident and parent of a middle school student, expressed her concern about a letter to the editor that appeared in the *Shirley Volunteer*. This letter, Mrs. Richardson explained, stated that the Shirley School District was on the state's No Child Left Behind watch list. Dr. Scott stated that Shirley is on that watch list, as are 385 other school districts. He explained that the Shirley School District, as an aggregate, is performing well but the Special Education subgroup has not made adequate yearly progress in MCAS results. Dr. Scott told Mrs. Richardson that he could review her child's test and then meet with Mrs. Richardson to help her understand what areas were problematic for her child.

Old Business:

The school committee moved forward to review the school committee minutes of August 24 and 30, September 15, 28 and 29. Mr. Wilson motioned to approve all of the minutes. Mr. Parker seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

The next item on the agenda was the Deficit Committee summary. Mr. Keady stated that the school requested that \$288,098 budget deficit be financed by the town. He stated that any money that comes into the town from one-time or unexpected revenue sources will go into a stabilization fund. With the school able to identify \$120,000 in revenue sources the town would divide equally among all of its budget lines to fund the remaining \$167,655. Mr. Keady also stated that it was determined that there would be a savings at Nashoba Tech of approximately \$23,000. Dr. Scott stated that he has recently been notified that there is a need to fund a SPED students out-of-district placement costs of \$38,000.

Mrs. Stern reviewed two drafts that she had prepared for the meeting to explain the deficit. Draft 1 was essentially what Mr. Keady had explained and would appropriate \$167,655 from town sources for school use. Draft 2 sought to use \$202,000 identified by the deficit committee as available funds for school use. Mr. Muffoletto motioned to accept Draft 1 for \$167,655 with the

condition that Mrs. Stern break down the money needed according to the proportions used in Draft 2. Mr. Parker seconded the motion. The motion was approved. Mrs. Stern will revise the draft and email the revision to the committee members.

Mr. Muffoletto left at 7:45 to attend a DEAC meeting.

Mrs. Stern updated the committee on the school building issues. She stated that the school has purchased the elongated toilet seats for a total cost of \$360 and have installed approximately 75% of them.

Dr. Scott explained that the district goals summary has been updated to include the MCAS results. Mr. Parker stated that, per the district goals, the committee should soon begin an evaluation of the superintendent. Mr. Bourassa will collect input from each member.

Mrs. Stern addressed the Spaulding Road bus issue. She stated that she has spoken with Hope Ball at the bus company and there have not been any problems with the middle school or elementary school bus runs. Mrs. Stern has confirmed this with Mrs. Jordan, middle school principal, but has not heard back from Mrs. Mahoney at the elementary schools. Mrs. Stern also stated that there is a problem with the Ayer High School bus run. One bus does not get back from the Spaulding Road kindergarden run in time to pick up its high school students. All of the AHS students get onto one bus and meets up with the Spaulding Road bus to unload its passengers so that they runs can continue. This solution is working out well now but Mrs. Stern is concerned about how the winter weather may affect this plan. Dr. Scott commented that the teachers have complained that there are buses arriving late to LAW; Mrs. Stern will notify the bus company.

Business Affairs:

Mrs. Stern reviewed Payroll warrants 813 and 313. She asked the committee members how the new warrant signing procedure is working out; all members stated that it was working fine.

In other related money matters, Mrs. Stern informed the committee that the new gym door at LAW was damaged recently and required \$3400 to repair. It appears evident that this was vandalism. She was also just informed that there may be a similar situation at the Center School; she has not had time to look into the matter prior to the meeting.

Mrs. Stern also informed the committee of an ongoing situation with the elevator at the middle school. It has been stopping in mid-service, trapping the occupant inside. The ventilation typically turns off and there is no way to contact anyone for service. The elevator inspection has expired; unfortunately without having the problem corrected we can't get it re-inspected. The School Building Committee has been aware of the problem. One solution to determining what the exact problem is requires someone to actually get stuck inside and report on what prompted the stoppage of service and what occurs inside the elevator. Mrs. Stern does not want to put the custodians at risk; the elevator company will need to find another means of testing the elevator. Dr. Scott stated that there are currently no students or faculty at the middle school who require the use of the elevator. Students and teachers have been instructed not to use the elevator until it is fixed.

New Business:

Dr. Scott stated that contract negotiations should begin soon with the teachers. Per the current teacher's contract, the school is obligated to begin by October 15, 2004. Dr. Scott explained that there should be two school committee representatives present at the negotiations as well as the superintendent and a town representative. There also needs to be a spokesperson or negotiator.

Dr. Scott explained further that this group typically met bi-weekly. Mr. Bourassa will ask the Board of Selectmen whom they might want as their representative. Mr. Parker and Mr. Prescott expressed interest in being part of the negotiations. Mr. Wilson offered to be an alternate, if needed. Jane Cook agreed to meet on October 27, 2004 at SMS at 3:30 to begin negotiations.

The FY06 budget preparations are underway. Dr. Scott explained that typically, the school committee gives the superintendent a target number to work toward and the superintendent will then work the numbers and present it to the school committee for review. Another method, he explained, was for the superintendent to submit a needs-based budget to the committee. Mr. Parker mentioned that he would like a subcommittee to work with the superintendent and FinCom to devise a budget. Mr. Bourassa mentioned that it would be hard for a volunteer committee such as the school committee to come up with a realistic number for the superintendent to work with. The committee agreed to have Dr. Scott prepare a level service budget and form a subcommittee once that budget has been presented.

Mr. Prescott stated that Mr. Keady has inquired as to whether any on the school committee members might be interested in becoming part of the Field Committee. The town is currently working to improve soccer and baseball fields. Mr. Wilson stated that he would volunteer.

Correspondence:

As there was no correspondence, Dr. Scott briefly reviewed the following pieces of information:

Policy: Student Transportation fees (final reading)

Shirley Middle School will begin its own after school program

LAW has hired a new SPED teacher who will begin on October 18, 2004

October enrollment: 725 students

The committee adjourned at 8:35 to go into executive session:

Roll Call:

Gary Bourassa: Yes

Bob Prescott: Yes

Paul Wilson: Yes

Don Parker: Yes

The members reconvened after the executive session. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 p.m.